FEDERAL AVIATION AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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QUESADA ANNOUNCES PLAN FOR FAA ASSIMILATION OF MILITARY AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL SERVICES

E. R. Quesada, Administrator, Federal Aviation Agency, has announced that the FAA is now preparing to assume the operation of about 2,095 military air traffic control facilities at 337 global locations. To handle the job, the Agency will need an additional 9,000 air traffic controllers and 6,000 maintenance technicians.

He made the announcement in a major address last night before the fourth annual meeting of the Air Traffic Control Association in Oklahoma City.

Speaking on the theme, "Project Friendship," at the conference kick-off banquet at the Oklahoma Biltmore Hotel, Mr. Quesada stated that "Once in operation, the project will offer better service for all users, increased safety through personnel stability, greater economy through a savings in overall manpower, and increased combat capability for the military."

The FAA Administrator said that certain air traffic control facilities and functions relative to military tactical type operation and air warfare training will remain under military control.

Military flight inspection of air navigation facilities as well as military flight services and air traffic controller training functions will also come under the FAA. Mr. Quesada said that some of the flight inspection functions can be absorbed by the end of this year. Other functions and facilities will be phased in at a later date.

The FAA Administrator summarized his address saying, "Project Friendship makes military aviation a special partner in a common venture for the better use by all users of the nation's airspace. In this respect, it represents the most progressive step taken to date to attain an air traffic control service that this country needs and deserves."

Attachment

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ADDRESS BY E. R. QUESADA, ADMINISTRATOR, FEDERAL AVIATION AGENCY, BEFORE THE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL ASSOCIATION, OKLAHOMA BILTMORE HOTEL, OKLAHOMA CITY, 7:00 P. M. OCTOBER 7, 1959.

"PROJECT FRIENDSHIP"

This evening I would like to discuss with you an FAA project of tremendous importance. The success or failure of it will have a major effect on this nation's security and national welfare for years to come.

The project is called "Friendship." It is a plan for FAA assimilation of a large number of military functions and facilities pertaining to air navigation and air traffic control--both domestically and overseas.

This project is of particular significance to you because as the air traffic controllers of the Federal Aviation Agency, you are the people who will put this project into operation and make it work. You will be the nucleus of it, and you and the FAA will grow with it.

How did Project Friendship come about? Quite simply, its origin is in the Federal Aviation Act of 1958... the Act that was passed by Congress just about 13 months ago and which outlines our course of action for the foreseeable future.

(more)

The Act sets us up as an independent Agency with all the management functions necessary to support the common needs of military and civil aviation in the United States. In effect, this means that we are the only agency in the executive branch of the government to which the President, the Congress, the public, and the aviation industry will look to for leadership in the development of major aviation policy in the U. S.

This places a most serious responsibility upon us in that we are charged with the development of plans and programs to implement such policies. Project Friendship is one of these programs.

This project bears on our responsibility to develop a unified air navigation and traffic control system. . one that will take into full account both military requirements for our national defense and the needs of civil aviation. In this principle, all users of the airspace -- the air carriers, the military, and the general aviation interests, concur.

This philosophy of a unified system is not, of course, a brand-new idea and should surprise no one. Ever since the law has provided for air traffic control services in this country there has been considerable joint activity between civil interests and the military. The very nature of the air missions of both make it absolutely necessary that cooperation between the two be complete. Without such cooperation and understanding in such a complicated business as aviation there would be absolute chaos in the air, and perhaps at a time when the nation could afford it the least.

The participation of military personnel in the operation of the Agency is an example of such cooperation. As of July 15, 1959, the Agency had 132 military personnel on duty with the various Bureaus and Offices in the headquarters and at the National Aviation Facilities Experimental Center in Atlantic City, N. J. Ten vacancies remained to be filled. Of the 132, 70 are Air Force officers, 39 are Navy (including Marine Corps) officers, and 23 are Army officers. We are also thinking about detailing a small number of military personnel to the Regions and Centers.

The present system of radar flight following and traffic advisory service for civil jets is another example of civil-military cooperation. It started as a crash program to provide increased high altitude safety to the first civil jets that began carrying passengers in late 1958. The service would not have been possible without the use of the Air Force's long range radar.

The Air Force and the FAA joined hands last year to improve safety in terminal areas, by expanding their control procedures to provide radar traffic advisory service to all pilots, whether operating VFR or IFR.

We have worked out arrangements with the military on the use of climb-corridor restricted areas which have not affected air defense requirements and have made it possible to free large blocks of airspace for civil use.

In the same way, we have worked out with SAC, TAC and other military commands satisfactory agreements for the use of reserved air refueling areas, both to reduce the potential for collision and to provide additional airspace for routine operations.

We have an arrangement with the military to operate RAPCONs (Radar Approach Control) for the Air Force and RATCCs (Radar Air Traffic Control Center) for the Navy.

Several months ago we signed an agreement with DOD and the Air Force to establish nine FAA centers for enroute air traffic control at Air Force SAGE super combat centers. Some of the functions found to be common to air traffic control and air defense are identification, flight following and radar surveillance. We felt that joint use of facilities would contribute to the identification capability of the air defense system and to centralized control of air traffic in the event of an emergency.

There have been many other cases of fruitful cooperative programs with the military. These have resulted in improved air traffic control service, better facility operation, and in better maintenance standards. We have had a number of successful exchange training programs. We have trained military air traffic controllers at our Oklahoma City center and more recently the Air Force has helped prepare a number of our flight operations inspectors to meet jet requirements by providing them a full course of training in the SAC jet KC-135 program at Castle Air Force Base, California.

These cooperative programs represent a great economy in the use of manpower and money by avoiding the duplication of facilities, equipment and functions. They have provided and will continue to provide savings to the government of hundreds of millions of dollars as well as provide a greater assurance of safety in the jet age. Wherever we can use the same equipment, facilities, techniques, and people--without compromising the mission of either agency--everyone is better off, including the taxpayer, who foots the bill.

These joint activities represent the beginnings of a unified air traffic control system--one that will provide for the safe and efficient use of the airspace and be compatible with civil and national defense requirements in peace and war.

To this end, the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 provides for the transfer to the FAA of functions, facilities, and activities of other executive agencies of the government which, and I quote Section 304 of the Act: "relate primarily to selecting, developing, testing, evaluating, establishing, operating and maintaining systems, procedures, facilities or devices for safe and efficient air navigation and traffic control."

The President is empowered by this section of the Act to effect such a transfer at his discretion.

It is clear that the intent of the Act, when it becomes fully effective, is for the FAA to absorb the bulk of the air traffic control functions now being performed by the military departments. The Department of Defense is in complete agreement with this principle.

Once in operation, the system will offer better service for all users, increased safety through personnel stability, greater economy through a savings in overall manpower, and increased combat capability for the military. The transfer will be one of considerable magnitude and will have to be handled on a gradual basis.

We initiated Project Friendship last May to determine in consultation with the Defense Department which military functions pertaining to air navigation and air traffic control - - both domestically and overseas -- should be transferred to the Agency, when the transfers should be made, and the time-phasing necessary. Of key importance in this project has been the support and understanding of the Defense Department as well as all civil aviation interests.

Project Friendship has involved nine major tasks:

1. To identify air navigation and air traffic control facilities and services suitable for FAA assimilation.

2. To develop personnel training requirements.

3. To develop a support program.

4. To study the requirements for assimilating DOD flight inspection functions.

5. To develop a program for assimilating certain military flight service functions.

6. To design a program for performing appropriate DOD activities in overseas areas.

7. To determine FAA's research and development requirements in connection with the transferred military activities.

8. To develop budget estimates.

9. Finally, and most critical to the success of the project, the preparation of adequate personnel legislation that is necessary before the military services can relinquish certain of their facilities.

The accomplishment of these tasks has brought out a number of complex problems that will have to be overcome before we can fully implement the project. We have found solutions to some, others have been elusive.

Agreements must be reached with the Defense Department and with foreign countries, or compromises effected, before certain segments of the overall project can be carried out. The program will remain flexible in application until the final plan is set and coordinated with all parties concerned. Even then, alternate courses of action will be developed and held in the event modifications are necessary. The project is still subject to a wide range of imponderables ranging from political considerations to budgeting limitations. For this reason we have concentrated on a planning program that will meet almost any contingency.

The functions scheduled for transfer fall into four specific areas: flight inspection, flight services, air traffic control training, and air traffic control services.

Our analysis of the project to date has revealed that there are some 2095 military air navigation and air traffic control facilities spread out over 337 global locations. Of the 337 locations, 98 are in 17 foreign nations. We also discovered that the operation of these 2095 facilities currently required approximately 20,000 military personnel. We have estimated that we can do the job with one-third fewer people, or about 13,300, of whom 3500 will be needed to man the overseas facilities.

To illustrate the economy envisioned by Project Friendship, Andrews Air Force Base in Washington handles about 234,000 traffic operations a year, utilizing 105 personnel to man tower, RAPCON, and GCA facilities. We estimate the same workload can be handled by a total of 68 FAA controllers, maintenance and administrative people since civilian employees do not require the support services the military need. To the government, Project Friendship in the long run will represent many millions of dollars saved in operating and maintenance of such facilities.

In considering the kind of military air traffic control and flight service functions suitable for assimilation, we concentrated on prime military locations where civil and military traffic was intermixed, or where the service to be delivered would provide greater benefits to users. Naturally, the locations possessing radar approach control service fulfilled this requirement, so that was given prime consideration.

Certain functions, facilities and equipment peculiar to air warfare training, or which are tactical in nature, will remain under military authority.

With regard to military flight services, the scope of our study was limited to functions where FAA and Military Flight Service are engaged in similar activities. This would include such things as handling non-tactical military flight plans, provision of air traffic control and military approval flight clearances, and handling military flight movement data. The functions we selected were VFR and IFR flight plans, alerting of Search and Rescue, and direction finder coordination. These were considered to be largely air traffic management activities.

The tentative time phasing for absorbing military facilities will be a coordinated FAA-DOD responsibility. The transfer of facilities could be accomplished at the rate of about 20 military locations per quarterly period. The project provides for assimilating a proportionate number of overseas facilities at the same time we take over domestic stations. This will give military commanders a domestic operations and training base for meeting their overseas requirements until such time as these overseas facilities can be manned by FAA.

We will be faced with meeting heavy recruitment and training requirements. We hope to conduct the entire training program at the Oklahoma City center. To do this, and speed it up, we may have to go to night classes. If necessary, we will also use military training facilities. We plan to construct two new school buildings at the Aeronautical Center: one for facilities training, the other for air traffic management.

Our target date for building construction is July 1, 1961. Project Friendship personnel requirements over a 5-year period--assuming a 100 percent transfer of military facilities--call for training 9000 controllers and 6000 maintenance technicians.

Our plans for taking over air traffic control services will necessarily remain tentative until such time as adequate personnel legislation is passed. We can, however, start assimilating some flight inspection functions by the end of this year and probably complete the entire transfer in two years. Military flight services could be absorbed within the present FAA structure by mid-1960.

To get the program off the ground and meet requirements for initial training and manning of the first group of facilities we will operate, we will initially establish 2109 new positions. Of these, 393 will be in training, 1071 will be in air traffic management, 545 in facilities, and 100 in supporting services such as personnel, supply and accounting.

The establishment of air navigational facilities will require additional flight inspection aircraft, facilities training equipment such as VORs ILS, ARSR, ASR,TACANs and communications equipment. In addition, we will put up a number of buildings to house this equipment.

The problem of recruitment will be one of our biggest headaches. We expect virtually no maintenance personnel to be available for transfer from the military services. We will therefore have to go to a labor market in which electronic technicians and engineers will be in very short supply. If necessary, we may have to reduce qualification standards and lengthen the training period. With respect to controller personnel, we will look to the military services for assistance.

As the Administrator, I am charged by Section 302 (g) of the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 with making a study of personnel problems inherent in the functions of the Agency and making legislative recommendations to the Congress on or before January 1, 1960, with regard to these problems. This study must consider various personnel needs including the requirements for special qualifications and training; retirement and hours of service; and special provisions to assure -- and I quote from the Act -- "availability, responsiveness, and security status of essential personnel in fulfilling national defense requirements."

Now, the crucial significance of this personnel legislation can be found in the legislative history of the Act. This clearly indicates that the transfer of the military aviation functions we have been discussing cannot take place on any comprehensive basis unless the personnel structure of the FAA is stable enough to guarantee service under all conditions.

It is my intention to propose legislation to the Congress that will not only satisfy national defense as well as civil aviation requirements, but will offer the kind of inducement for career service that would be attractive enough in itself to guarantee a stable personnel structure for the Agency.

I realize that the job of the controller is highly technical and is subject to great pressures over long, nerve-wracking hours of service. I am familiar, too, with the frequent disruptions an air traffic controller encounters in his personal life, especially in the case of those who work in high density areas. Factors with regard to various employee benefits are considered in our legislative planning along with the more technical requirements that must be satisfied.

The FAA is for the most part the sole civil employer of the kind of technical specialists that are needed for essential FAA operations. After Project Friendship has been fully implemented, the military services will no longer be any significant source for the recruitment of trained air traffic control personnel. Controllers and technicians will have to be recruited from among people capable of becoming effectively qualified in such jobs. Developing a proficient controller or maintenance technician requires two to three years of the kind of training and experience that will be obtainable only in the FAA. With such a major training investment, the Agency should be able to retain such people for an extended period of time, if only to amortize its investment. We are, therefore, interested in creating the framework for rewarding and useful careers in air traffic control.

There is still another consideration -- an overseas personnel rotation program. This will be necessary to operate and maintain the overseas facilities we plan to absorb under Project Friendship. Sometime during their careers, most FAA employees will have to be prepared to take on extended tours of overseas duty. Without a stable personnel structure, the overseas program could well fold up.

An effective personnel structure is, in the final analysis, always based upon a mature sense of responsibility, a dedication to duty, and high esprit de corps among the employees involved. An organization with such a structure is characteristically competent, respected, well-paid, and thoroughly disciplined -- a "blue-ribbon" organization in which membership is both an honor and a privilege.

In sum, the kind of personnel legislation we plan to submit to Congress will include elements intended to attract qualified FAA employees to a distinct career service within the Agency. Such a service would offer appropriate benefits in return for which employees might be expected to accept limitations on certain personal privileges.

We must, in any event, insure the Agency's capability to continue its essential functions in war and peace. We must be able to make necessary transitions from normal to emergency operation, if need be, without loss of effectiveness, or unnecessary disruption to essential operations.

In summary, Project Friendship makes military aviation a special partner in a common venture for the better use by all users of the nation's airspace. In this respect, it represents the most progressive step taken to date to attain an air traffic control service that this country needs and deserves.

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